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AN
INTERNATIONAL PROTECTORATE
OF
THE CONGO RIVER,

BY
SIR TRAVERS TWISS, D.C.L., F.R.S.,

Esq., &c., &c.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY FEWTRISS & Co., 25, LITTLE QUEEN STREET, W.C.

1883.

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With the Authors' Compliments

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AN INTERNATIONAL PROTECTORATE OF THE CONGO RIVER.

THE question of the Congo, in other words, the question of the free navigation of the great Arterial River of Equatorial Africa, has acquired in the present day an unforeseen importance, which was not dreamt of in the last century, when the only value of the River was that its northern bank supplied a famous market and a convenient port of shipment to the African slave-dealer. The discoveries, however, of Livingstone and of Stanley have revealed to the world the fact, that the Congo is the great channel of water communication between the Atlantic Ocean and the immense basin of Equatorial Africa, and that the cataracts—which have hitherto barred access from the sea to its upper waters—have providentially served to arrest the advance of the white slave-dealer into the interior of the continent, and have so far prevented the natives from regarding the white man with merited aversion. English enterprise, however, with good intentions towards the natives, had endeavoured in vain, so recently as in 1857, to force a way from the sea by tracking boats through the troubled waters of the rapids, against which the canoe of the native had failed to make any headway, but the Falls of Yellala presented an insuperable obstacle to the further advance of the boats, and it was not until Mr. Stanley, descending from the interior of Africa, arrived at Boma, on the north bank of the river, on 8th August, 1877, that it became known that beyond the Falls of Yellala the river was again navigable, and was, in fact, identical with the

Lualaba, which Livingstone had discovered in the interior of Africa, and had partially explored. The consequence of this identification of the Congo with the Lualaba may be said to baffle calculation as regards its bearings upon the future intercourse of Europe with the interior of Africa, and it may be fitly an object of serious consideration on the part of the European Governments how best to prevent the inroad of European civilization, which has now become inevitable through the channel of the Congo, from proving itself to be a curse, instead of a blessing, to the native populations of Central Africa. The white man, it cannot be denied, owes some compensation to the posterity of those, whom his ancestors of olden time so cruelly wronged by carrying them away from their native country and selling them into slavery in a foreign land, and it would well become the Christian States of Europe and of America, to concert amongst themselves measures, which should prevent a work of so much promise, as that which has been successfully inaugurated by private enterprise, from suffering shipwreck through any rivalry or dissensions amongst the white men themselves.

Before the first appearance of Stanley at Boma, in 1877, the Congo had already the reputation of being the fourth in magnitude of the African rivers. It has a noble estuary extending from Red Point on the north, which is a little to the south of Kabenda Bay, to Cape Padron on the south, so called from a stone pillar reported to have been set up by Diogo Cam in 1484 to mark the discovery by the Portuguese of a river, then called by the natives "the Zaire." The entrance, however, of the river itself may be said to commence at about nine miles to the eastward of a line drawn from Red Point to Cape Padron, where the channel is narrowed to six miles, between French Point to the north and Shark Point to the south, which latter point is about six miles to the eastward of Cape Padron. French

Point is the southern termination of a narrow spit of land on the northern side of the estuary, about two miles long, known as the Banana peninsula, being the southwestern extremity of an opening leading to Banana Creek and to Pirate's Creek, the latter of which creeks is the outlet of a branch of the Congo, communicating with the Monpanga Islands. To the eastward of Pirate's Creek is Boolambemba Point, abreast of which the river is narrowed to $3\frac{1}{4}$ miles; and several writers, in their account of the entrance of the Congo River, have erroneously described this point and Shark Point as the boundary points of its mouth. On the north shore the current off Boolambemba Point is both strong and deep, whilst along the south shore from Shark Point the soundings are tolerably regular, and the anchorage is safe but unhealthy. Boolambemba Point is also known by the name of Fathomless Point, from the circumstance that at the distance of a third of a mile from the land, no bottom was found with ninety-three fathoms of line. It must not, however, be supposed that the fathomless character of the stream in this locality is solely occasioned by the excessive depth of its bed, inasmuch as the River brings down with it such an immense volume of water, that in some places no bottom has been found with 200 fathoms of line, and the volume of water shoots out in an unbroken stream into the Atlantic Ocean with a velocity varying from four to eight miles an hour. Further, at the distance of nine miles seaward, its waters are still fresh, and at the distance of forty miles they are only partially mingled with those of the sea, whilst the discoloration of the sea-water has been visible 300 miles off. The Congo, it will thus be seen, is a very different river from the Niger, the next great river on the West Coast of Africa, which has a delta with twenty-two mouths. The extreme rise of the River in the rainy season, which begins early in November and continues until the middle of April, is about

nine feet above its ordinary level. The stream, during this period, is very rapid, and carries out to sea floating islands formed of the roots of various kinds of plants and covered with bamboo and grass; and as some of these islands are reported to be more than 100 yards in length, they are a source of danger to ships under weigh, and more especially to ships at anchor. Such are the somewhat inhospitable conditions of the entrance of this mighty River, which was formerly frequented almost exclusively by the European slave-dealer. The steamship, however enables the mariner of the present day to overcome the difficulties of the ascent of the Lower Congo, which were so formidable to the sailing ship. There are, however, some dangers still attending its navigation, which can only be effectively controlled through an international concert amongst the Christian Powers, whose subjects frequent the River.

As we ascend the River from Boolambemba Point, the northern shore is low and unattractive to the eye, until Bull Island comes in sight at the distance of about eleven miles, above which there are several inlets or creeks hitherto unexplored, but studded with villages. After passing these and at about twelve or thirteen miles above Bull Island the explorer arrives at Puerta da Lenha, on the northern shore of the River, where the deep water channel ceases. This was the principal station in former days where the slave-ships were brought up, and where the slaves which had been purchased at Boma and had been brought down the River in boats were shipped for the outward voyage. There are Dutch, Portuguese, English and French factories here established, the great Dutch Company having two factories, and having of late enjoyed almost a monopoly of commerce with the natives. The River may be said to be open all the way to Puerta da Lenha, and a fresh sea breeze sets in generally at noon, so that

the anchorage is considered the healthiest position on the River. Above Puerta da Lenha the River divides into three branches, which are separated from one another by a number of islands, the northernmost branch being named the Maxwell River or the Noangwa, the middle branch being the Mamballa River or the Nsibul, which is the most direct route to Boma, whilst the southernmost channel is known as the Sonho and is winding and intricate, but it has the greatest depth of water and has a soft sandy bottom, so that a vessel grounding on it suffers little inconvenience beyond waiting for the return of the high tide to float her off again. At last the explorer reaches Boma, about thirty-one miles above Puerta da Lenha. Here is said to have been formerly the greatest slave-market in the world. The town extends several miles along the bank of the River, and it is delightfully situated in the midst of a picturesque and mountainous country. It enjoys a dry and healthful atmosphere, and is destined, we may hope, to become a central entrepôt of innocent trade between Europe and the interior of South-West Africa. Here was formerly the utmost limit to the navigation of the Lower Congo, before the steamers under the flag of the *Association Internationale Africaine* were launched upon its waters. They are able to breast effectively the current, which increases in swiftness above Boma, and can ascend as far as Vivi, the first station established by Stanley on behalf of the *Comité d'Études du Haut Congo*. Vivi may thus be regarded as the portal of a new country, which the researches of Stanley have thrown open to the European traveller, who is sure to be followed by the merchant, and the question will of necessity arise, as to what law shall be binding on the European merchant who frequents the River, and to what jurisdiction he shall be amenable, if he disobeys that law. A difficulty on this subject has already arisen on the Lower Congo, where it may be justly said that each man sets law

unto himself, for no European Government exercises an acknowledged jurisdiction over the River or its banks, and when crimes have been committed, the extemporised judges have had to take upon themselves also the duty of executioners, and the sense of their own weakness has led them in the interest of self-preservation to have recourse sometimes to measures of severity, which a constituted authority might not think it necessary to adopt. Vivi, the first station established by Mr. Stanley, in 1879, is at the distance of about 115 miles from the sea, and it would seem that already within three years since it has been founded some dozen trading stations have been opened between it and Boma. Above Vivi the River makes a turn to the north, and in following it we arrive at the Falls of Yellala, where the River ceases to be navigable, and continues so for about fifty miles as far as the Cataract of Isanghila, where Stanley has established a second station, which is connected with Vivi by a road overland. Above Isanghila the River becomes again navigable for a distance of about eighty miles, at the termination of which Stanley has built a third station, and named it Manyanga. Here the traveller must again leave the River, and proceed by land to Stanley Pool, to which station Stanley has constructed a road practicable for caravans. Up to this point the *Comité d'Etudes du Haut Congo* has established its stations upon the right or northern bank of the River, but when Stanley, in ascending the River, in 1881, arrived at Stanley Pool, he found that M. de Brazza, who had ascended the Ogôué River from the French possessions on the Atlantic Coast, some degrees to the north of the Congo, after having worked his way through an unknown country during a journey of about eighteen months, had struck the Congo at Stanley Pool. Further it appeared that M. de Brazza had concluded a treaty with an agent of Makoko, King of the Batikès, of the Congo, under which the latter

had ceded to him the territory on the northern shore of the Lake for the establishment of a French station. Mr. Stanley accordingly crossed over to the southern shore, on which, in pursuance of an agreement with all the neighbouring chiefs, he has built a fourth station, and called it Léopoldville. It would seem from the text of M. de Brazza's Convention, of which a facsimile has been published by the Société de Géographie in Paris, as an accompaniment to M. de Brazza's narrative of his expedition, that King Makoko, whose death has recently been reported, claimed to exercise a kind of Suzerainty over the chiefs who were in possession of the north shore of Stanley Pool, and that two of them gave their adhesion to and were witnesses to the Convention above-mentioned by subscribing their marks to it.*

Early in the next following year Stanley established a fifth station at Ibaka, at the confluence of the Quango with the Congo, at the distance of about 100 miles above Léopoldville, from which place the Congo had become once more navigable, and has hitherto been found to be free from all physical obstructions. It would thus appear that the Congo River, as now revealed to us by the researches of Stanley may be regarded as divisible into three well distinguished portions. The Lower Congo, extending from the sea to the Falls of Yellala; this portion is throughout navigable by steamers of light draught, and, as a matter of fact, two steamers, owned by the Association Internationale Africaine, and named respectively the *Belgique* and the *Espérance*, are at the present time regularly running between Banana and Vivi. The Middle Congo may be said to extend from the Falls of

* The concluding words of the Convention are as follows:—Par l'envoi à Makoko de ce document fait en triple et revêtu de ma signature et du signe des chefs ses vassaux, je donne à Makoko acte de ma prise de possession de cette partie de son territoire pour l'établissement d'une Station Française.

Yellala to Stanley Pool, and upon a portion of this, namely, between Isanghila and Manyanga, the steamer *Royal*, owned by the same Association, now plies. The Upper Congo, on the other hand, leads from the waters of Stanley Pool into the centre of the African Continent, and upon this portion of the River a steamer was launched on 3rd December, 1881, under the auspicious name of *Forward* (En avant). It is computed that this vessel will have an open course before it of 940 miles leading into the very centre of the African Continent. Stanley's fifth station has been established at Ibaka, where the waters of the Quango join those of the Congo. I have mentioned these five leading stations as being those which Stanley had established in the course of 1881 and 1882, since which time, however, various auxiliary stations have been formed, Lutété, for instance, and Ngoma, between Manyanga and Léopoldville, and both of these new stations are in very fertile districts. Kimpopo also a new station, established at the northern end of Stanley Pool, is in a food district much richer than that which was selected for the parent station of Léopoldville. Msuata, is a fourth auxiliary station established a little to the south of the point, where the Quango joins the Congo. A sixth station may also be mentioned, which is a main station on the Congo, and is named Bolobo, about a hundred miles above Ibaka. Other stations have probably been established before the present time. The number of those which I have mentioned will serve to show how rapid has been already the advance of the European into the interior of Africa in the footsteps of Stanley, and how desirable it will be to maintain the novel conditions of peaceful intercourse, under which the white man has found a welcome amongst the various native tribes.

M. Emile de Laveleye, the distinguished economist and jurist, has suggested in an article in *La Revue du Droit*

Internationale, that the River Congo shall be neutralised, or that at least the stations founded upon it by the joint enterprise of the "Association Internationale Africaine," and the *Comité d'Etudes du Haut Congo*, should by a common accord of Nations be recognised as neutral territory in the general interests of civilization and of humanity. The alternative proposals thus advocated by so eminent an authority are by no means of equal import, inasmuch as the neutralization of the Lower Congo in the acceptation of the term "neutralization," as applied in modern days to inland waters in distinction from the High Sea, would operate to prohibit access to the River within its headlands to the armed vessels of every State. But such a prohibition, it is to be feared, would, in its results, prove to be an encouragement to the piratical tribes at the mouth of the River.

So recently as in 1875, the British Commodore, Sir William Hewett, had occasion to land a party of marines at the mouth of the Congo, and to punish the authors of the destruction of the English ship *Geraldine* and of the massacre of her crew; and in the sailing directions for the West Coast of Africa, published by order of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty of England, there is inserted the following caution: "The Missolonges, a tribe inhabiting the creeks about Boolambemba and Bull Island are very savage, and frequently attack merchant vessels and boats proceeding up the River without an escort. Their object is plunder, but they do not hesitate to commit murder, if opposed. Vessels, therefore, proceeding to Puerta da Lenha, should, if possible, obtain the protection of armed boats from any men-of-war in the vicinity." Further, it must be borne in mind that the slave-trade was kept up on the banks of the river as late as 1875, when an English expedition dealt the slave-dealing tribes what is to be hoped may prove to be a death-blow to their trade.

On the other hand, from "The Correspondence respecting the Territory on the West Coast of Africa, lying between 5° 12' and 8° of south latitude, presented to the British Parliament in the course of the present year" (Africa, No. 2, 1883), it appears that the trading factories on the north bank of the Congo, with the exception of the English, are more or less worked by slave labour; and the British Consul at Loanda reported to the Earl of Derby, that all the houses on the Congo hold slaves, more or less, and would not hesitate to export them, if they could find a market for them. If it be assumed that "public opinion" on the Congo has improved since 1877 with regard to the mode in which the European trader looks upon the native, it can hardly be doubted that what is wanted at the present time is not the exclusion of the armed ships of all nations from the waters of the Congo, but rather the continual presence of an armed ship of one or other of the nations, whose subjects have factories on its banks, whose commander should be authorized to maintain an international police over the river, in virtue of the Admiralty Jurisdiction exerciseable by all nations over waters which are within the flux and reflux of the tide.

It has been further suggested by more than one eminent authority that if the proposal to neutralize the water of the Congo should prove to be inadmissible in the opinion of the European Governments, an international control over its waters might be established analogous to that which the Great Powers have concerted in respect of the mouths of the Danube. Portugal, however, might be disposed to object to the institution of an International Commission for that purpose, as being a derogation from her asserted rights of sovereignty over the river and its headlands; but even if Portugal were to agree to the establishment of such an International Commission, it would not be by itself adequate to satisfy the present requirements, and much

less the future requirements of the Congo River. A despatch of Consul Hopkins addressed in 1877 to the Earl of Derby, then H. M. Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, concludes with the following statement :—

“ All the white men in the tract of country lying between the northern boundary of Angola and the southern boundary of the Gaboon consider there is no law ; they are not responsible to any Government for their actions and they do just what they please.” This despatch is dated from Loanda, the capital of Angola, and the residence of the Governor-General of the Portuguese settlements on the west coast of Africa to the south of the Congo.—Parliamentary Paper, Africa, No. 2 (1883), p. 81.

I have alluded to certain rights of Sovereignty which Portugal has asserted over the Congo River and its headlands, and that her pretensions to such Sovereignty might create on her part an indisposition to assent to the establishment of an International Riverain Commission over the Congo, analogous to that which the European Powers have concerted in the case of the Danube. England, however, has strenuously contested and opposed the pretensions of Portugal to any such Sovereignty, nor can it be successfully contended that England has recognised any such rights of Sovereignty under the Treaty of Alliance between England and Portugal concluded at Rio de Janeiro on 19th February, 1810, nor under the Treaty for the Abolition of Slavery signed at Vienna on 22nd January, 1815, nor in the Additional Convention of July, 1817, although eminent Portuguese authorities have contended for such an interpretation of those treaties. It may be admitted, indeed, that Portugal under those treaties has recorded her pretensions to the territories of Kabenda and Malemba to the north of the Congo, but on the other hand she has placed on record the fact that those territories were at that time not in the occupation of the Portuguese Crown. But it is

hardly reasonable for Portugal to insist, in the present day, upon rights of Sovereignty over the River Congo in virtue of priority of discovery four centuries ago, when she has virtually renounced all rights of Sovereignty north of Cape Padron under a declaration annexed to the Treaty of Pardo, or as it is more usually termed the Treaty of Madrid of 1786, concluded, under the mediation of Spain, between France and Portugal. That declaration placed on record the fact that Portugal limited, at that time, her assertion of rights of Sovereignty to the territory south of the River Zaire, whilst she acknowledged the right of France, equally with Holland and Great Britain, to trade freely with the coast north of that River. It is worthy of note that in that declaration, the *right* of France to trade with the people of the coast to the north of the Congo is contrasted with the *liberty* to trade with the people of the coast as far south as Ambriz and Massula, if such liberty was enjoyed by the English and the Dutch. It should be borne in mind, by any person who may peruse this treaty, of which the text is set out in Marten's "Recueil des Traites," vol. iv., p. 104, that the River is there described by its native name of Zaire, and that the term "Congo" is used to signify the territory to the south of the River. This remark may serve to explain a passage in the Treaty, which is, at first sight, obscure, and has embarrassed several persons, where it speaks of the country "east north-east of Congo." I do not propose, on this occasion, to enter into any discussion of the claims of Portugal to Sovereignty over the coast to the south of the River Zaire. England has formally put on record, in 1846, her objection to that claim, and has refused to recognise any right of absolute dominion on the part of Portugal over the coast to the north of the port of Ambriz, which is situated in 7° 52' south latitude. My object in alluding to the controversy which exists at the present time as to the pretensions of Portugal to exercise rights of Sovereignty over

the coast of West Africa to the northward of Ambriz, has been by no means to disparage her pretensions, but rather to show that they may give rise to diplomatic difficulties on her part, if the European Powers, whose subjects are interested in the navigation of the Congo, should be disposed to concert an International Protectorate of the River.

On the other hand, the claims of Portugal to a kind of Suzerainty over the south bank of the Lower Congo rest upon other considerations than the discovery of the mouth of the River by Diogo Cam in 1484. Portugal appears to have exercised from time to time a Protectorate over the King of Congo, and latterly to have clothed her Protectorate with the character of Suzerainty, by exacting from the miniature King (Regulo) at the time of his so-called coronation, an act of homage and an oath of fealty to the Crown of Portugal. It has been contended also that the Suzerainty extends at the present time over the Chiefs of Kabenda and Malemba on the coast to the north of the Congo River, by reason of those chiefs having paid tribute to the King of Congo, when he was independent of Portugal. On the other hand, it may be said that when the King of Congo acknowledged himself to be a vassal of the Crown of Portugal, of the first occurrence of which fact there is no certain record, he simply placed his own dominions under the Suzerainty of the Crown of Portugal, and by abdicating his independence, forfeited his own claim of Suzerainty over any neighbouring chiefs, who would not become the vassals of the Portuguese Crown, unless they also in their turn did homage and took the oath of fealty to it. Besides there is no doubt, that if Portugal is entitled to regard the King of Congo as her vassal, his ancestors became vassals of the Crown of Portugal long prior to the Treaty of Madrid of 1786; but Portugal in that Treaty made no claim of Suzerainty over Kabenda and Malemba, when

she recognised the right of France and England and Holland to trade freely with the people of the coast north of the Congo River.

The question of an International Protectorate would be much simplified, if Portugal should be disposed to confine her pretensions to rights of Suzerainty over the territory immediately subject in former days to the King of Congo, as such a right of Suzerainty would not conflict with the treaties for the suppression of the slave-trade, which England has concluded with the Chief of Kabenda and with the various Chiefs and Headmen of the Congo River at intervals between 1854 and 1876.* If Portugal had at such time Sovereign rights over both banks of the River, those treaties would be waste paper, but their validity would not be impeached by England's recognition of Portugal's Suzerainty over Congo proper. What seems to be desirable under present circumstances is, that the European States, whose subjects have factories on the banks of the Congo, should establish by a common concert an International Protectorate of the Lower Congo. Ever since the Congress of Vienna of 1815 proclaimed the liberty of the navigation of the great arterial rivers of Europe, and at the same time condemned the African slave-trade to a slow but certain extinction, Europe has hesitated, wisely it may be said, to apply to the great arterial rivers of Africa the same principle of public law, which she has successfully applied to the Rhine and to the Danube, until the slave-trade has become extinct. The

* So recently as in March, 1876, Great Britain has concluded treaties with the principal Chiefs holding authority on the south bank of the Congo River, for the abolition of the traffic in slaves; for the prevention of human sacrifices; for the encouragement of lawful commerce; for the protection of all white traders, more particularly British; and for the punishment of all pirates and disturbers of the peace and good order of the River. Appendix to Parliamentary Paper, Africa, No. 2 (1883).

time has now arrived when Europe may feel called upon to engraft the same principles of public law upon the institutions of a sister continent, as may have been found to work, well in Europe. It may be necessary, however, to supplement them with certain further provisions, which the circumstances of the Congo River render imperative. The organisation of the native races on the banks of the Congo is still *tribal*, and *territorial* Sovereignty in the sense in which it has superseded *personal* Sovereignty in Europe, is still unknown. Personal Sovereignty, however, is recognised by the European traders on the Congo, and each factory hoists the flag of the nation, from which the trader holds himself to be entitled to claim protection, if he should be wronged by a native chief, or by a trader of another European nationality. We have here then an element of order, and it deserves the careful consideration of the European Governments whether they should not take advantage of it, before disorder becomes rampant amongst the crowds who are sure to throng before long in the interests of commerce the channel, which leads into the heart of Central Africa. If certain Powers should agree as to the establishment of an International Commission of the Congo River, after the example of the Commission of the Danube, they might invite the other Powers to accede to it, and they might safely advance a step further. Personal Sovereignty, if effectively brought into play, would be an obvious remedy for the state of "wrong and unlaw" which exists at present on the Lower Congo. The same States, which are disposed to consent to an International Riverain Commission, may come to a further understanding that each State shall authorise its Commissioner to exercise consular jurisdiction on its behalf over the subjects of the State which he represents. The delivery of an *Exequatur* would not be a necessary condition for such consuls to take upon themselves the exercise of

their jurisdiction over their fellow subjects, inasmuch as the *raison d'être* of an *Exequatur* would not exist where there has been no recognition of a territorial sovereign, and the *judge consul* is an institution of an age, when the theory of territorial Sovereignty had not as yet superseded in Europe that of personal Sovereignty.

The International organisation of the Middle and the Upper Congo is a more difficult problem, inasmuch as the materials for such an organisation, which are ready at hand on the Lower Congo, do not at present exist, after you ascend the River above the Falls of Yellala, although France has already evinced an interest in the question by acquiring a grant of land on the northern shore of Stanley Pool for the establishment of a French station. We cannot but hope that the friends of the *Comité d'Etudes du Haut Congo* have suffered unnecessary alarm at the hoisting of the French flag over the Station of Brazzaville. The same flags float over the French factories on the Banana Peninsula and at Boma on the Lower Congo, and there are no words in the Convention of 3rd October, 1880,* between M. Savagnan de Brazza on the one part, and King Makoko, Suzerain of the Batakes, and his Chiefs on the other part, which imply anything more than the cession to M. de Brazza of the usufruct of the territory, which extends from the River of Ina to Impila, for the establishment of a French station at Ncouna. However this may be, the question as to what law the European merchants, who may frequent the

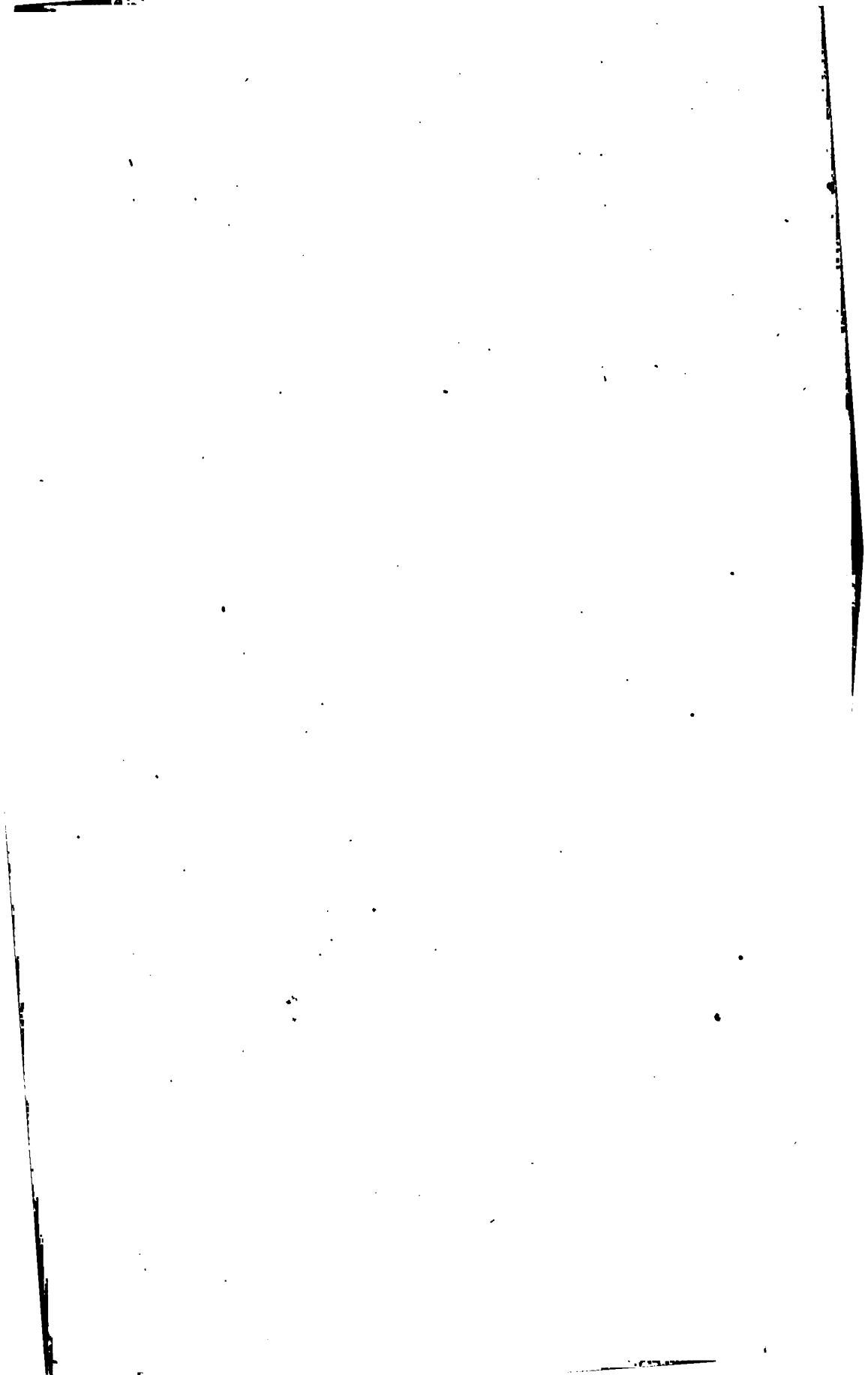
* This Convention is distinguishable from an earlier Convention, which purports to have been concluded on 10th September, 1880, between M. de Brazza and King Makoko, at Ndao, under which King Makoko has ratified a cession of territory on the Lefini made by [a chief named] Ngampey, for the establishment of a French factory, and has ceded to France his hereditary rights of supremacy over it. Both Conventions are printed in the *French Journal Officiel* of 3rd December, 1882.

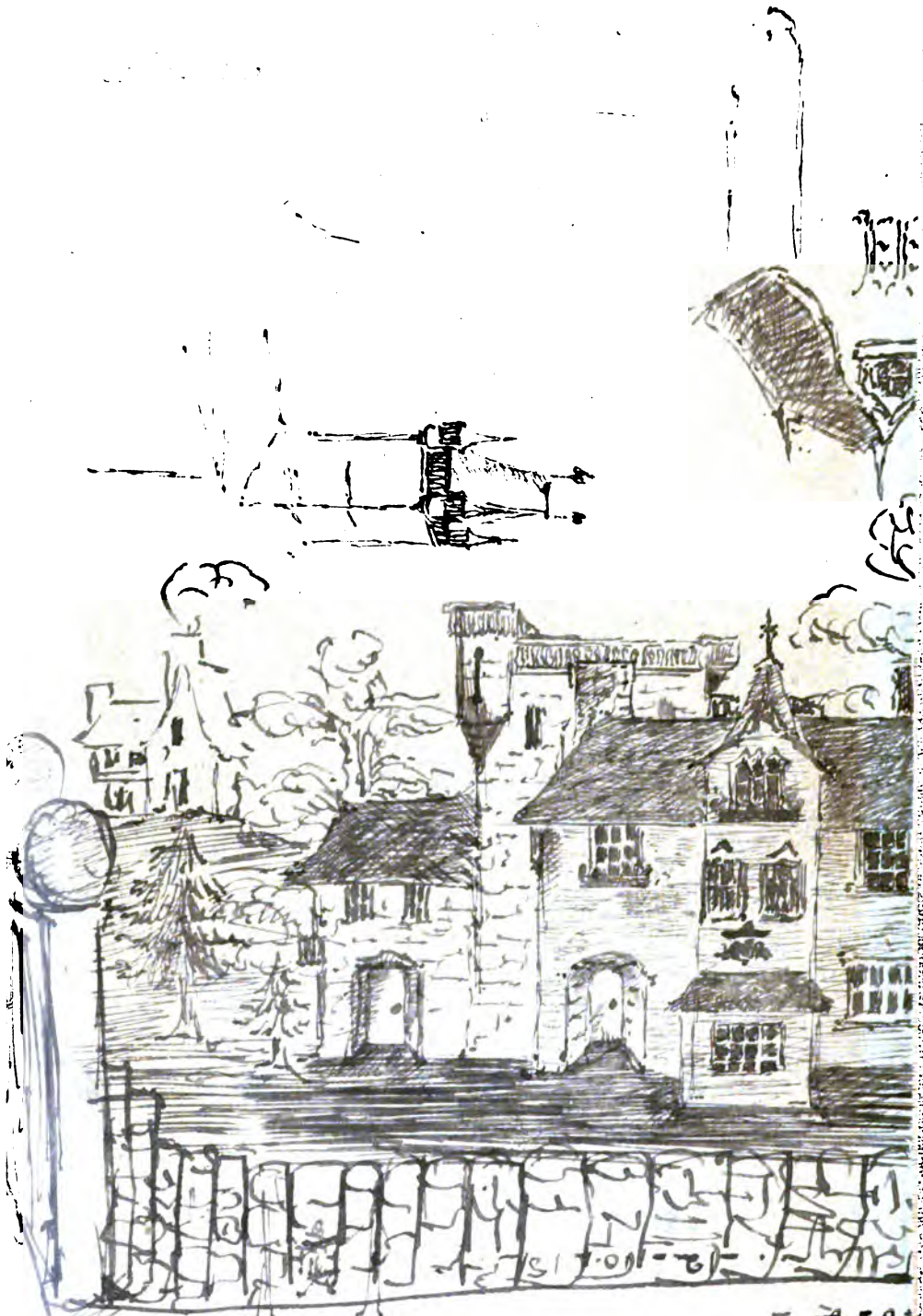
Upper Waters of the Congo, and who may establish trading factories here and there on its banks, shall consider themselves to owe obedience, and to what magistrates they shall be responsible, awaits solution. It would be well, indeed, if the Powers who may agree to establish an International Commission on the Lower Congo, and to empower their respective Commissioners to exercise consular jurisdiction over their fellow citizens on the Lower Waters should extend the personal jurisdiction of their Consuls over their fellow-citizens on the Upper Waters. Still further, it would be much to be desired, if the same Powers should at the commencement of their deliberations agree to draw up and sign a declaration of disinterestedness as regards the Upper Waters of the Congo. The signature of such a declaration was adopted for the first time, as a preliminary to an International accord, in the Protocol to the Triple Treaty of London, of July 6, 1827, when Russia, France, and Great Britain entered into an alliance to bring about the Independence of Greece. It has been frequently adopted since that time by the European Powers as a preliminary to their conferences for the settlement of political difficulties in Asia and in Northern Africa. The experience of half a-century may thus be invoked in favour of such an International Act, which, in the present moment, would allay all apprehension of a coming struggle amongst the European nationalities for the control of Nature's highway into Central Africa. The authority of a Suzerain Power is not requisite to give validity to such an arrangement amongst the Christian Powers. It would be an International accord worthy indeed of the civilisation of our epoch, and might arrest at once the further growth of any nascent difficulty.

Temple, 16 August, 1883.

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